

February 27, 1958

MEMORANDUM

To: John P. Milligan  
From: Harold A. Lett  
Subject: Approach to Our Housing Problems

As each of the several case situations unfolds, there is increasing evidence of a need for a much broader educational approach to the problem of housing, particularly in the Central Jersey area. In dealing with real estate professionals, we find a greater backlog of miseducation and emotionalism than has existed anywhere with the possible exception of swimming pool operators.

The apparently universal intransigence we are encountering in the field stems from an absolute assurance each person holds that his business will be ruined if he observes the law. This same fear was held by hotel operators as well as skating rink and swimming pool operators until we were able to get over to the hotel association that no one person could be hurt because all persons were subject to the same rules. There wasn't much impression that could be made upon a single one. It seems to me that we have to recognize this as a basic element in our approach to realtors.

In the Burlington-Mercer area, we have several elements which would suggest a reason for concentrating all our forces upon this area:

- a. We have good cases working there.
- b. There are innumerable developments in all price levels currently on the market.
- c. There is active movement in the market because of the going and coming of military personnel
- d. We have excellent ground for concentrating here because of our need of protecting the right of military personnel regardless of race or creed.
- e. We should have very active allies in the command of the military posts in the area whose personnel are being injured by existing policies.

This leads me to suggest that in conference with a representative of the real estate commission and of Fort Dix top command, we set up a long-range program that will involve real estate people, developers and financial institutions serving the general area and in a series of meetings get over to them the significance of existing practices in that kind of a strategic area. I think as I said before, we have all of the elements that can permit spotlighting the conditions there in such way that the real estate people will be placed on the defensive. I don't know of any better place in the country upon which to concentrate constantly, consistently and vigorously. It may be to our advantage also to call together some of the heads of state voluntary organizations to help us plan the approach here. We need a lot of professional advice in setting a new pattern, because we can't afford to be wrong in our approach.

HAL neg